

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A digital data selling and buying transaction method for performing selling and buying transactions for an encryption key for encrypted digital data among a plurality of terminal units connected through a communication network, the method comprising:

receiving buying request data representing a buying order and a buying condition for the encryption key for the encrypted digital data, the buying request data being transmitted through the communication network;

receiving selling request data representing a selling request and a selling condition for the encryption key for the encrypted digital data, the selling request data being transmitted through the communication network;

deciding a transaction price for the encryption key for the digital data corresponding to the received buying request data and selling request data for the encryption key; and

concluding buying transactions and selling transactions corresponding to the decided transaction price for the encryption key for the encrypted digital data;

wherein the encrypted digital data are converted into usable data used—by a decryption process performed in accordance with auxiliary digital data corresponding to the digital data, and the auxiliary digital data includes validation period data indicating a period in which the an encryption key may be used and limit period data indicating a period in which the encrypted digital data may be reproduced.

2. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising storing information with respect to selling transactions and buying transactions.

3. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising publicizing the information with respect to the selling and the buying transactions through the communication network.

4. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the use of the digital data has been limited.

5. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the digital data is character data.

6. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the digital data is picture data.

7. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the digital data is audio data.

8. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the digital data is program data for a game.

9. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising storing the digital data to a device that performs a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions.

10. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the process for concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to the transaction price.

11. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 10, wherein the transaction price is stored in a device that performs a process

for the concluding of the selling transactions and buying transactions as time elapses.

12. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to information with respect to people concerned with the selling transactions and the buying transactions.

13. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 12, wherein the information regarding the people concerned contains identification information and personal information of the people.

14. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising publicizing at least part of information regarding a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions through the communication network.

15. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein at least part of information regarding a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is stored and the stored information is rewritten.

16. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein buyer-side data that represents the buying condition is data with respect to a buying price.

17. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein buyer-side data that represents the buying condition is data regarding a buying transaction execution date.

18. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein

buyer-side data that represents the buying condition is data regarding a buying transaction settlement method.

19. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein seller-side data that represents the selling condition is data regarding a selling price.

20. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein seller-side data that represents the selling condition is data regarding a selling transaction execution date.

21. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein seller-side data that represents the selling condition is data regarding a selling transaction settlement method.

22. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising settling concluded selling transactions and buying transactions and generating data with respect to a paying and receiving process corresponding to the settled result.

23. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 22, further comprising rewriting asset information of personal information of people concerned with settled selling transactions and buying transactions to pay and receive the transaction price with respect to the selling transactions and the buying transactions.

24. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 22, wherein the digital data have been encrypted to limit use of the digital data.

25. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the transaction price is decided for the auxiliary digital data.

26. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising storing the auxiliary digital data to a device that performs a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions.

27. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the conclusion of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to identification information of the auxiliary digital data.

28. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to a number of buyer-side data and a number of seller-side data with respect to the digital data and the auxiliary digital data.

29. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 28, wherein the number of the buyer-side data and the number of the seller-side data with respect to the digital data and the auxiliary digital data are stored in a device that performs the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions as time elapses.

30. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to a number of the digital data and a number of the auxiliary digital data supplied and received.

31. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the number of the digital data and the number of the auxiliary digital data supplied and received are stored in a device that

performs the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions as time elapses.

32. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed with a number and contents of buyer-side data and a number and contents of seller-side data corresponding to the digital data and the auxiliary digital data, and a number of the digital data and a number of the auxiliary digital data supplied and received; and the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions comprises:

reading the number of the buyer-side data and the number of the seller-side data corresponding to the digital data and the auxiliary digital data and the number of the digital data and the number of the auxiliary digital data supplied and received, the number of the buyer-side data, the number of the seller-side data, the number of the digital data, and the number of the auxiliary digital data having been stored, and

deciding a transaction price corresponding to the data read in the reading step.

33. (previously presented) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein a process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions is performed corresponding to information regarding people concerned with the selling and the buying transactions, identification information of the auxiliary digital data, and the transaction price decided for the digital data and the auxiliary digital data; and the process for the concluding of the selling transactions and the buying transactions comprises:

reading the information regarding the people concerned, the identification information of the auxiliary digital data, and the transaction price decided for the digital data and the auxiliary digital data, the information regarding the people concerned, the identification information of the auxiliary digital data, and the transaction price decided for the digital data and the auxiliary digital data having been stored, and

deciding the transaction price corresponding to the data read in the reading step.

34. (currently amended) The digital data selling and buying transaction method system—as set forth in claim 1, further comprising transmitting the digital data and the auxiliary digital data regarding the concluded selling transactions and buying transactions to a buyer with respect to the concluded selling transactions and buying transactions through the communication network.

35. - 43 (cancelled)

44. (currently amended) A digital data selling and buying transaction method for performing selling transactions and buying transactions for digital data through one or more of a wired and a wireless communication network, the method comprising:

receiving buyer-side data that represents a buying order for the digital data and a buying condition through the communication network;

receiving seller-side data that represents a selling order for the digital data and a selling condition through the communication network;

deciding a transaction price of the digital data corresponding to a number and contents of the buyer-side data and a number and contents of the seller-side data; and

concluding the selling transactions and the buying transactions corresponding to the transaction price;

wherein the digital data are converted into usable data ~~used~~ by a process performed in accordance with auxiliary digital data corresponding to the digital data, and the auxiliary digital data includes an encryption key, validation period data indicating a validation period in which the encryption key may be used, and limit period data indicating a limit period in which the digital data may be reproduced.

45. - 57. (cancelled)

58. (new) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the auxiliary digital data includes an attribute value indicating whether the validation period is in effect.

59. (new) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the auxiliary digital data includes an attribute value indicating whether the limit period is in effect.

60. (new) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 44, wherein the auxiliary digital data includes an attribute value indicating whether the validation period is in effect.

61. (new) The digital data selling and buying transaction method as set forth in claim 44, wherein the auxiliary digital data includes an attribute value indicating whether the limit period is in effect.